

ABOUT TOBY.

(From Helen and Cecil.)

— PUNCH, ESQUIRE.

MY DEAR SIR,—

May we write to ask you about Toby? (Not the M.P., but the other dog.) We know that he is your dog, and it isn't exactly any business of ours, but don't you think there is something the matter with him?

HELEN and I have wondered for years and years why he doesn't cheer up, but he never does. Nurse says he is "likely one of the born tired sort."

But then you always look so jolly, and we don't think it is quite fair for Toby always to look so out of it.

We took him to the harness-room the other day, and most of the men thought he was starting in distemper, because of that droop in the lower lids, but the coachman says he has far more the "Too Old at Forty" look, and that he's holding himself stiff because of the rheumatics, and scowling because he is sure there won't be any Old Age Pensions in his time.

We asked Lady MONTFORT, and she says she is certain it is the Feather.

"Dogs nowadays are quite as particular as people, CECIL, and of course the feather is altogether out of date, and his ears—well, they are absolutely rank."

(HELEN says I ought to explain that Lady MONTFORT cuddles lap-dogs at big Shows, and comes here afterwards to tell Mother all her wrongs, and how the judges cheated.)

Mother thinks that any dog would dislike a pile of hard books to sit on, and she would send you a new easy-chair for him with pleasure. She thinks also that perhaps Toby isn't musical, and keeps his head stiff because of those bells. But

Dad is certain that Toby is "all there and quite fit," only that he is offended because you keep all your jokes from him.

I told Dad that of course I knew you would never mean to be unkind to poor Toby.

Toby is really awfully like a Lord Justice Person who comes here for week-ends, and, when we asked him what was wrong, he said:

We dashed down with both pictures to Dad, and he measured, and certainly *Almanack-Toby* has shorter legs. Dad thinks he may be his younger brother, but that we had far better write and ask you.

When you reply, there is just one more thing. What are you and *Almanack-Toby* laughing about? We don't want to worry all over Christmas. Our

best guess is that you had invited a dinner-party, and that everybody forgot to come, and so you and *Almanack-Toby* had it all to yourselves.

Goodbye, and hoping you are well, as it leaves us at present,

Your very respectful
SPECTUL CECIL.

P.S. — HELEN sends you "A Merry Christmas," and so do I, and hugs and bones to our darling Toby. The bones are coming by parcel post, only mind the right Toby gets them, please.

[NOTE TO HELEN AND CECIL. — Mr. Punch tells me that the *Almanack-Toby* looks so pleased because he's got his Christmas number off his chest, and needn't bring out another one till next year. The Ordinary Toby looks so thoughtful because he knows he has to bring out a fresh number every week of his life, poor beast! He does all the work, you see; and Mr. Punch just does the laughing.—Ed.]



A HOT RETURN.

"OH, I'M SO SORRY I COULD NOT COME TO YOUR 'AT HOME' YESTERDAY."

"DEAR ME, WEREN'T YOU THERE?"

"WHY OF COURSE I WAS—HOW VERY SILLY OF ME—I QUITE FORGOT."

"Counsel been trying to joke a client out of Dartmoor, my boy! Nothing more aggravating to that class of mind for which Mr. Toby is celebrated."

Oh—HELEN has just interrupted. She says I needn't send this at all! Only I have stamped the envelope. The *Almanack* has come, and Toby is smiling! We were so awfully excited, until suddenly we wondered—I mean—is it our Toby?

Commercial Candour.

"CRÈPE de Chine slips, in black, ivory, and various colours, copies of French models at three times their price."—*Morning Post*.

"Pedigrees traced; evidences of descent from Public Records."—*Notes and Queries*.

THE most usual evidence is the possession of a skin like parchment. One often reads of such cases of heredity.

A SECRET COMMISSION.

[As far as the author can make out the facts, AUGUSTUS, affianced to AMELIA, has been instructed by her to purchase some gloves in the West End and forward them to her country address. A secret commission is given to him by a representative of the vendors, but he at once returns it.

Note.—On and after January 1, 1907, the acceptance of secret commissions will constitute an offence against the law of the land.]

ENCLOSED, AMELIA, you will find the gloves,
Three pairs, as ordered—suede, and long and fine,
And of a hue to match the turtle-dove's,
That bird that stands for fond affection's sign;
Also, my conscience being very nice,
I'd have my lady know exactly what
Secret commission on the market price
Her true AUGUSTUS got.

For she that o'er the counter served and sold
Had beauty—not of your heart-breaking kind,
But more anæmic, of a frailer mould,
And (need I say, AMELIA?) less refined;
And as I sat a-sampling gloves, and deemed
That none was good enough to meet the case,
The shop-handmaiden looked at me and beamed,
Beamed all across her face!

I gave no provocation, I will swear.
The initiative was hers and hers alone;
She must have noticed my connubial air
And claimed the sex's triumph as her own;
Anyhow, there before me smiled the girl,
And O AMELIA, count it not for sin
That blushfully I let my features curl
In a slow fatuous grin.

This trivial detail I should not narrate—
Plainly a reflex action, pure of guile—
Only that I discovered too, too late
Your aunt was there and watching all the while;
Therefore I think it best that you should glean
The truth from me, nor let your judgment err,
Tricked by a lurid version of the scene
As it appealed to her.

I trust my story (now you have it right)
May heal between our hearts the threatened breach;
Clean is the breast I make; O clasp it tight
When next I bring it round within your reach!
I took the veiled commission—that is true;
I had a moment's softening of the brain;
And then I thought of Honour and of You,
And gave it back again!

O. S.

Brighton.

"Unsettled. Rain fell steadily for some hours. Madame ALBANI was unable to fulfil an engagement to appear at a concert . . . Her absence was due to an attack of hoarseness."

THE above passage appears in *The Daily Telegraph* under the general heading "HEALTH AND SUNSHINE."

Looking Ahead.

FROM the "Legal Query" column in the *Melbourne Herald*:

"My first husband has been away from me for over seven years. Would it be legal to marry again? If I did, and my second husband left me, could I sue him for maintenance?"

"P.—Can anyone give directions for the preparation of a dish which, when served, appears to be composed of boiled potatoes and greens with melted cheese mixed in it?"—*Star*.

Answer to "P."—The best way is to boil some potatoes and greens, and mix some melted cheese with them.

THE BOOK-HAWKERS.

The scene is the Strand, the time some few years hence, when our leading authors shall have adopted Miss GERTRUDE ATHEKTON's suggestion, in her recent letter to the Press, that authors should print their own books and sell them from barrows in the street. The pavement, as far as the eye can reach, is lined with brainy men of letters. One recognizes among them Mr. BERNARD SHAW, faultlessly dressed as usual in the conventional costume of the man about town; Mr. FRANK RICHARDSON, his face almost completely obscured by a full set of chinchilla whisker-fittings; Mr. GUY THORNE, trying not to look like Mr. RANGER GULL; Mr. A. E. W. MASON, in feathers; and numerous others. In the foreground are Prospective Purchasers.

First P. P. (consulting a list). I always think books make such capital Christmas presents, don't you? Now, let me see—

Second P. P. And this new arrangement is so much better than having to go into a shop. And it's so nice to think of the dear author getting the 800 per cent. profit instead of the publishers. Now, let me see—

Mr. Hall Caine (with startling suddenness). Here you are! Here you are! Buy! Buy! Buy! All genuine Maux, and genius in every syllable. We are the old firm. Here you are, lady. *The Eternal City*. All about the great city of Rome, of which you have doubtless heard. *Eternal City*, lady? Highly recommended.

First P. P. Would the dear Duchess like that, do you think? It sounds nice.

Second P. P. I think she would prefer something a little more in the movement. Rome is so very *musty*, isn't it? I wonder which is HOPE's barrow.

Mr. Anthony Hope Haucker. HOPE, lady? Here you are. I've got 'em! I've got 'em! Pick 'em where you like, and choose 'em where you like. This lot is in the old style, dialogue highly spoken of in the best circles, also Ruritanian adventures, a mode to which we have recently returned. These others are of the middle period. A problem given away with each volume. You prefer the easier kind? Certainly, Madam. Make it up into a parcel for you. GEORGE, one *Sophy*, and look slipper about it. Anything else to—No? Thank you, Madam. Good-day, Madam.

First P. P. Well, that disposes of that. Now—

Second P. P. My little nephew is just going to school. I must buy him a book. What he wants, I suppose, is—

Mr. Rider Haggard. Blood! Walk this way, walk this way! Buy the boy blood! Try our new thriller. Starts with a fight, and not a let-up till the finish.

Mr. Kipling. Instruction with amusement! We blend 'em. We blend 'em! Give the kiddo our last, and see him take in English history till he swells. Do you want, best-beloved, to think 'scruciatingly imperially? This is the place for you. Here we are! Here we are!!

Mr. H. G. Wells. Stop. You must picture me writing this book with a certain passion and pleasure, a little forlorn figure with a taste for sporting prophecy . . . or perhaps . . . I wonder . . . to us who move athwart the great . . . Change, Madam? Yes, Madam!—Roll up! Roll up! If you like sentences that break off in the middle into three full-stops, roll up! I'm the qualitee!

Mr. Henry James. If you want sentences that never break off at all—

Mr. Bernard Shaw. Does your face hurt you when you try to smile? Are you weary of the Old Humour? This way for the new cure. Our last! Our last! Full of rollicking death scenes. Tragedy the only true farce. Here you are! Fun and tuberculosis! Comic consumption for all!



THE PART GREATER THAN THE WHOLE.

JAPAN. "MAY I ASK, ARE YOU THE 'UNITED' STATES?"

UNCLE SAM. "WAAL, I CAN'T SAY RIGHT AWAY. I'M JUST CON-SULTIN' CALIFORNIA ON THAT VURRY POINT."

[The Japanese Government has complained that its Treaty with the United States has been infringed by the refusal of the Californian high schools to admit Japanese children. The Federal Government, however, has apparently no power to enforce obedience, on the part of individual American States, to the terms of its own Treaty.]



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THE DESCENT TO MAN.

"ARE YOU AWARE, SIR, THAT YOUR DOG HAS BITTEN THIS CHILD?"

"WELL, THE BOY'S BEEN AGGRAVATING HIM; AND, AFTER ALL, THE DOG'S ONLY HUMAN!"

Mr. A. E. W. Mason. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I spy strangers. I mean, look here! Look here! Where does Mr. MASON get his lovely fiction? Buy! buy! buy!

Mr. Guy Thorne. What is it master likes so much? Who gets mentioned in sermons by the Bishop of LONDON? Me! Me! Me! Here you are! Religion and Patchouli. Rally round. Rally round.

Confused Chorus of Authors. Here you are . . . Buy! buy! buy! Medieval Romance . . . Dips into the future, four-and-six a go . . . If you can't afford to winter in Egypt, do the next best thing, and buy our . . . Sicilian scenery . . . Come on! . . . Buy! Buy!! Buy!!!

First Purchaser (as she drives away. The floor and seat of the carriage are completely covered with books. More are coming on in a cab). Oh, dear, I've such a headache.

Second Purchaser. So have I. And I'm certain we've both bought dozens and dozens more books than we wanted. I came out meaning to buy four, and I must have got four hundred.

First P. It's so hard to resist the poor things. They did look so hungry, they were so grateful when you bought anything. I thought I should have cried when that pathetic man wanted to give us what he called a dead snip for the Aeroplane Derby of 1950.

Second P. Well, after all, though we have bought so much more than we intended, I suppose we've done some good.

[They drive off.]

Mr. Kipling. Not bad. Eighty-three Pucks gone since lunch. Have to be printing another edition soon.

Mr. Caine. This is no new job for me. Been doing my own booming for years!

Mr. H. G. Wells. Prophecy is all right. Comets are moving.

Mr. A. E. W. Mason. I've sold pounds and pounds of Feathers.

Mr. E. W. Hornung. My brochure *One Hundred Handy Ways of Killing a Policeman* is going strong.

Mr. Guy Thorne. Ah, my dear friends, ought we not to feel as we look around us how blessed—

Constable X 15. 'Op it, there, 'op it! You've been 'anging about here long enough, you authors. 'Op off, now.

[They 'op off, as scene closes.]

"What is a Hygienic Shave?"

THIS is a question asked by a barber's shop window in Fetter Lane. The answer is easy. A hygienic shave is a very near thing. Thus, if you were to try the Sun-bath Cure in London just now, and didn't die, that would be a hygienic shave.

Promoting a Nuisance.

A CONTEMPORARY states that Lord MONTAGU has "offered a 500 guineas prize annually for the best performance of the aeroplane in England." Many a true word is spoken in a misprint!

Making it Quite Clear.

LADY wishes to recommend a good Plain Cook; leaving through going away."—Provincial Paper.

A TRAP FOR COUNTRY MICE.

MR. PUNCH'S UNTRUSTWORTHY GUIDE TO LONDON.

CHAPTER XIV.

St. Paul's.

No visitor to London, even an American here only for a week end, should fail to see St. Paul's Cathedral; but anyone proposing to do so must hurry, for the edifice is said to be in danger of collapsing at any moment. Several evening papers are subsisting at the present time entirely on this rumour. As to the truth or falsity of it, time alone can testify; but a celebrated architect has given it as his opinion that if it did fall the crash would be terrific, while Sir GILBERT PARKER, interviewed the other day in *Considerable Thoughts*, staked his reputation on the belief that were a collapse to come the cause would be a subsidence of one of the foundations. "In the event of a disaster of this kind," the great publicist added, "nothing could save the ball. It would inevitably come to the ground." No wonder that with authorities such as this in so pessimistic a mood a good deal of anxiety is felt in newspaper-reading circles.

For some reason that his biographers have never fully explained, Sir CHRISTOPHER WREN placed this masterpiece of monumental masonry in the midst of drapers' shops, and fairly near, not only the General Post Office, but also the statues of Sir ROBERT PEEL and Queen ANNE. Londoners to-day, however, have cause to be grateful to the famous architect for also placing the building on a bus route, for were no buses to pass the doors, we should have to reach it either (1) on foot, or (2) in a cab, which would be respectively (1) wearisome, and (2) expensive.

Since the rumours of impending dissolution have gained ground, spreading even to the morning press, it has been debated whether or not traffic should be allowed near St. Paul's at all, for fear of shaking the structure; and several of the minor Canons, with voices of unusual resonance, have been dismissed for similar reasons, or condemned to spend an hour every morning in the Whispering Gallery to learn softer tones.

The theory of Signor MARCONI, that there is sympathy between great buildings all the world over, and that St. Paul's is falling because the Campanile of St. Mark's fell, is treated with scant courtesy



OUR UNTRUSTWORTHY ARTIST IN LONDON.

The peril of St. Paul's. Renewing the foundation—for which a sinking fund is being raised.

by Sir OLIVER LODGE; but none the less there are more things in heaven and earth, as SHAKESPEARE (OR WAS IT THE EARL OF RUTLAND?) said—than are accounted for by the philosophy of *Horatio*, and with the ZANCIGS puzzling the whole *Daily Mail* staff, one hesitates to say that anything is impossible or even unlikely.

Whatever the cause, the fact remains that St. Paul's is threatened by *The Evening Standard*, and therefore we would say to all intending visitors:—"Go as soon as you can, and don't stay long." Cast-iron umbrellas may be obtained at the corner shop at the Cheapside end; but of course no one born to be hanged was ever killed by a falling stone.

Speculation is always rife as to what will happen to the site of St. Paul's

when the *débris* has been cleared away. Dr. CLIFFORD, interviewed on the subject, said he thought that there could not be a better position than this for a Non-conformist College. Mr. OSWALD STOLL, on the other hand, has already completed the plans for a new Empire, while the old cry that there is no good central City garage has again sounded, with some significance. It is also suggested that the summit of Ludgate Hill is obviously the best place on which to erect the platform from which aeroplanes leaving London for Manchester could start.

All this is, of course, premature; but if not premature what are we? Meanwhile, defiant alike of rumour or history, Archdeacon SINCLAIR continues to take his meals in the very shadow of this imposing structure, between each mouthful remarking with infinite sang-froid, "Threatened buildings live long." That he may be a true prophet in the present case is the fervent wish of all those not interested in the fall of the celebrated fane.

Mr. HALL CAINE is also among the optimists, but we should, he says, be prepared for the worst, and he has therefore offered as a test case to stand, in the event of demolition occurring, on the top of Ludgate Hill among the ruins, with his head bare, for a whole morning, so that some idea of what the Dome was like may be communicated to sight-seers.

MUSICAL NOTES.

THE remarkable popularity achieved by Mr. WAKELING DRY's *Life of Puccini* (JOHN LANE), illustrated by photographs of the gifted maestro

Driving his motor,
Wrestling at Pompeii,
In his motor-boat,
In peasant dress,
At his farm,
Snowballing,
Descending Mount Etna
on a mule,

has, we are not surprised to learn, prompted a well-known firm of publishers to prepare a series of similarly illustrated monographs of leading British composers.

The first of the series will, of course, be devoted to Sir EDWARD ELGAR, and will be enriched with twelve instantaneous photographs of the famous composer of *Gerontius* by W. G. BEDLAM. Amongst other characteristic poses, Sir EDWARD will be depicted

In the uniform of the Bavarian Highlanders,
Playing pelota at Allassio,

OUR UNTRUSTWORTHY ARTIST IN LONDON.
The peril of St. Paul's. A Sunday morning disappointment.



Miss Binks (breathless, hurrying to catch London train after week-end trip). "CAN YOU PLEASE TELL ME THE EXACT TIME?"
Old Salt. "'ALF EBB."

Deerstalking at Edgbaston with Sir OLIVER LODGE,
Dancing the tarantella with Mr. ROBERT HICHENS,
Writing to the Manager of *The Times* Book Club,
Re-dedicating his *Olaf* to the Crown Prince of Norway.

The second volume will have Mr. HENRY J. WOOD for its hero, and here Mr. W. G. BEDLAM's magical camera is credibly asserted to have surpassed its own record in the graphic portrayal of the famous conductor. The plates will be forty-four in number, the most enchantingly characteristic being those which represent Mr. WOOD

Standing on his head and conducting with his right foot without a bâton,
Descending Primrose Hill on a toboggan,
Arrayed in the gorgeous robes of the Hereditary Voivode of Mingrelia, As Mazeppa.

Mr. JOSEF HOLBROOKE, whose wonderfully brilliant symphonic extravaganzas have caused RICHARD STRAUSS so much searching of conscience, will be the subject of the third volume. Mr. BEDLAM has secured a set of superb snapshots of

the great orchestral virtuoso, amongst which the following are perhaps the most arresting in their mingled charm and appropriateness:

Mr. JOSEF HOLBROOKE playing full back against the Springboks,
" " playing his arrangement of *The Bells* to Mr. C. F. MOBERLY of that ilk,
" " sailing his model yacht on the Round Pond,
" " playing spillikins with Mr. ALGERNON ASHTON,
" " ascending Ruwenzori on a giraffe.

A painful impression has been caused in musical circles by the rumour that the gifted critic of *The Pall Mall Gazette* has resolved to modify his style and to abandon henceforth the use of the words "vital," "accomplishment," "sensitive," "delicate," "exceedingly," "superlative," "extreme," and "supreme." We understand that a national memorial is being promoted by Mr. HENRIKER HEATON to impress upon the *P. M. G.* critic the desirability of reconsidering this suicidally self-denying ordinance.

We have been asked to correct the erroneous statement that BORIS BOGUS-

LAWSKI, the famous Wallachian violinist, is the only prodigy in his family. The painful fact now transpires that his younger brothers, BOLESŁAW, TASSILO, BRONISŁAW, and PANJANDER, and his sisters, WILLIBALDA, MAJUBA, and FRISKINA, are all similarly affected with musical hypertrophy, and that, according to present arrangements, their *débuts* will occur at intervals of a year or so between 1907 and 1914.

A conclusive explanation of the anarchical condition of the Muscovite Empire has been furnished by *The Musical Herald*. The concertina, it appears, is the national instrument of Russia.

Mr. IVOR SCHENECTADY JENKINS, F.R.C.O., who recently adjudicated at the Eisteddfod at Gwaun-cae-gurwen, is going on as well as can be expected.

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

Three years ago I began to have lessons on the piano. However, owing to illness in the family, I was obliged to give it up. Do you think that if I were to restart in earnest I could make my mark?—YOUNG HOPEFUL.

ANS.—Consult your family doctor, if any of your family are still alive.

THE PROBLEM OF THE POLES.

My suffering Public, judge me not amiss
If, rising from the narrow bonds of Rhyme,
I seek the nobler Blankness of the bards,
Where one may stretch oneself, and go ahead,
Not pausing, save for breath, or fat, round words
To clothe his thought withal. I cannot help it.
I am constrained thereto by such a theme,
A mystery so complex, so obscure,
That I can tackle it no other way.
Permit me, then. And, with apologies,
I now pronounce the purpose of my song.

There are among us certain men who seem
(Mark the poetic glories of that line)
Possessed of an insane desire to scale
Our high terrestrial poles—or North or South—
Say North. And what I want to know is this:—
Suppose they get there, what will happen then?

(There are two North Poles really—I know that;
But for simplicity we'll call them one.)

Take first the compass. This, as you're aware,
Inevitably, with unerring nose,
Points to the North. I'm sure I don't know why;
Such is its mad, mad humour. Now, suppose
You stick it on the Pole; how does it act?

First you would say that, as it seeks the North,
And, as that lies directly underneath,
It points straight downwards. So it would appear.
But, mark you, what about the other end?

This (which, with deference, we'll call the Tail)
Has an affinity towards the South,
Equal and opposite in all respects.
One end looks North, the other end looks South.
If, then, your nose points downward to the earth,
From the position of your unshamed Tail
The South Pole must be clean above your head.
But, as you're standing on the northern end
Of the terrestrial axis, for a fact,
The South Pole, being at the other end,
Must stick out right away beneath your feet.
So that your Tail, which points toward the skies,
Must at the same time look the other way.
Dash it, it can't do both. So *that* won't do.

Now for another. This is harder still.
Science, for travail of geographers,
Draws a straight line through Greenwich, pole to pole,
Which she calls nought or zero, which you will.
Now any place that isn't on that line,
Considered in connection with the poles,
Has bearings East or West. Contrariwise,
All of this world that isn't East or West
Must be in line with Greenwich. Mustn't it?

Now then, suppose a person climbs the Pole,
In what direction must that person gaze?
South. For up there there is no East or West;
And, though he screw his head off, he can still
Only look Southward. Thus his line of sight,
As it sees nothing lying East or West,
No matter where he looks, must pass through Greenwich.
And, as he slowly circles round his Pole,
And yet can never look away from Greenwich,
It follows that that quaint old-fashioned spot
Moves, with his eye, clean round the world and back.
But Greenwich *doesn't*—hang it, Greenwich *can't*!
Where are we, Readers? Here we are again.

But wait a minute. No. I'll tell you what.
Man, in the limits of his finite mind,
Of finite things alone has cognisance.
All that is real, everything that *is*,
Must have three what's-his-names (Dimensions. Thanks),
Or else it's simply nowhere. Now a line,
Being, as EUCLID properly observed,
Length without breadth, which is ridiculous,
Has one di-what's-his-name, which doesn't count.
We see, then, that meridian through Greenwich,
Saving in Science's disordered brain,
Doesn't exist—and every spot where man
Can rest his foot is something East or West;
There is no atom on this mundane orb
But has its little bearings. Very well.
Now put that person up his Pole again.

Recalling what we said of him before,
It becomes clear to an unbiassed mind
That the position which he occupies
Has bearings neither East nor West. And thus,
If we apply the paragraph above,
Wherever else his doubtful post may be,
It forms no part of this terrestrial globe.
That is to say, there is no Pole at all.
Which being satisfactorily proved,
I fail to see why people want to go there.

DUM-DUM.

THE CITIZEN'S MAGNA CHARTA.

THE "League of Universal Rights" has recently been founded by Mr. PARFITT (who is, we believe, a descendant of CHAUCER'S "verray parfit gentil Knight") in order to crusade against the laxness shown by cabmen, railway guards, omnibus conductors, waiters, and others in the performance of their respective duties.

According to *The Daily Express*, a start was made in the streets of London on December 5 by a representative of that paper and the founder of the League, and some disheartening scenes were the result. The Members, however, are not going to be deterred in the prosecution of their common-law rights, and are prepared to undergo some inconvenience in carrying out the following programme:—

Calls will be made at irregular intervals during the legal hours at the Carlton, Cecil, Savoy and similar hotels, when the several managers, being common innkeepers (as stated on the licences posted up in their front halls) shall be required personally to furnish a Leaguer, or "M.L.U.R.," with a glass of four-ale to be drunk on the premises and as publicly as possible.

The station-masters at the London termini, being employees of Carrying Companies within the meaning of the Act, will be requested to label the luggage of M.L.U.R.'s, and transfer the same to the guard's van during the Christmas holiday season, when the usual shortage of porters is to be expected.

The Postmaster-General, as a paid public official, will be called upon to attend in person at any branch post-office within the County of London and hand over the farthing change on the price of a postcard to any Leaguer, if the latter is dissatisfied with the demeanour or dilatoriness of the young lady behind the counter.

Motto for the Congo Free State.

"RED rubber and the breaking up of laws."

Is the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons for December 6, there occurs this:

"Licensing Law: Petition from Eccles for alteration of law."
Poor old Eccles of Caste! He wants greater facilities!

FORECASTS FOR 1907.



II.—CHURCH PARADE ON A WARM DAY IN 1907.

[“Men’s dress is showing an increasing tendency to make comfort the first consideration.”—Daily Paper.]

THE POET’S INFLUENZA.

[“Tie up the knocker, say I’m sick, I’m dead.”—Pope.]

To-day, alas! no witty *mots*
 Shoot through my keenly quick (ahem!) brain;
 I feel a fullness in the nose,
 A soreness of the mucous membrane;
 My headache, too, is most severe;
 The pains within my limbs are stinging;
 And, though I’ve noises in each ear,
 ’Tis not the Muse that does the singing!

My Pipe is out of tune; I find
 That when I breathe thereon it splutters;
 Its notes are of the throaty kind,
 Or “flash” as those the forger “utters”;
 I struggle bravely but, although
 My motto says *Nil Desperandum*,
 That other thing I have to blow
 Would make the very pipes of Pan dumb.

To ask me now for jests and quips
 Would be abominably cruel;
 Sealed is this pair of lyric lips
 That open only for their gruel;
 So, reader, don’t expect from me
 A poem wrought with artful cunning;
 You would not ask it could you see
 These eyes, like *Charley’s Aunt*, “still running!”

BY SPECIAL MOTOR-LICENCE.

[Motor-car marriages are the latest freak of American Society.]

From our Porkville (Pa.) Correspondent.

THE fashionable function of the week has been the marriage between Lord ADALBERT FITZ-EGMONT and Miss SADIE Z. SPLOSHER, which took place on the bride’s paternal motor-car at eighty miles an hour.

The bride was attired in the cutest of ‘possum-skin wedding-dresses, with priceless antique motor-goggles said to have belonged to one of her *Mayflower* ancestors, while the bridegroom wore with aristocratic distinction an immaculate motoring-suit of rhinoceros-hide. The officiating clergyman read the marriage service through a megaphone, and the opening voluntary, “*O who will o’er the downs so free?*” was skilfully tooted on the motor-horn.

Owing to Lord ADALBERT’S unfortunate mislaying of the ring, a spare non-skid band had hastily to be substituted for it at the last moment.

A novel touch was given to the wedding-breakfast by the killing of most of the provender *en route*, but the feast came to an unexpected termination through the front car colliding with a policeman. At the magistrate’s court the party was sentenced to pay a fine of \$10,000, and the marriage lines were endorsed.

Next month Lord and Lady A. FITZ-EGMONT hope to entertain their friends with a motor-car divorce.



Passenger (faintly). "S-S-STOP THE SHIP! I'VE DROPPED MY TEETH!"

TO A PRINCETON ROWING MAN.

*[Mr. ANDREW CARNEGIE has presented a lake four miles long to Princeton University in order to enable them to start a Boat Club.]

HERE'S a welcome to our brother from the brotherhood of oars,
From the men who smite the water in their Eights and in
their Fours:

They have heard the news with gladness, and they bid him
take his seat

With his hands about the spruce-wood and the straps about
his feet.

You will learn, they say, to suffer, and your learning will be
long,

Through the days of toil and patience that shall serve to
make you strong,

Days of tedious repetition in the cold or in the rain,
Days of limitless endurance, days of discipline and pain.

But it's worth it, yes it's worth it: you will find our words
are true

When a sudden change converts you from a chaos to a crew;
When your boat moves fast and faster, and your bodies seem
to spring

All at once to the beginning from the rapture of the swing.

You shall know the joys of racing, you shall hear the frenzied
din

When your flag floats out in triumph and the cheers proclaim
a win;

And you'll bear without a murmur, when the fates ordain
the test,

To be fairly met and beaten, though you know you've done
your best.

And when age, that weary teacher, lays his burden on your
back,

You can come and watch the young ones in their yellow and
their black;

And your vanished youth will greet you and your heart
renew its glow

When you see them swing as you did in the days of long ago.

R. C. L.

"WHAT'S in a name? says SHAKESPEARE. The Athlone Urban Council believe that Custume Place will be more acceptable to the general bulk of the residents than Victoria Place. CUSTUME, the brave Irish sergeant, and his comrades sacrificed their lives in defence of the Old Bridge during the Williamite Wars, their heroism being favourably compared with that of HERODOTUS 'in the brave days of old.'"—*West Meath Independent*.

Every schoolboy student of *The Lays of Ancient Rome* will remember how well HERODOTUS kept the bridge. For, after all, as the *West Meath Independent* reminds us, what's in a name?

Mr. Punch begs to acknowledge noble consignments of Calendars and Christmas offerings from Messrs. RAPHAEL TUCK, MARCUS WARD, and C. W. FAULKNER; Rag-Books from Messrs. DEAN; Crackers from Messrs. CALEY and TOM SMITH; and Pocket Books and Diaries from Messrs. DE LA RUE and JOHN WALKER. He proposes to take the opinion of some of his favourite hospitals on their merits. Regarded as literary achievement, he is quite sure that the printed matter contained in these seasonable gifts would compare favourably with that of many of the masterpieces which overflow his Booking Office.

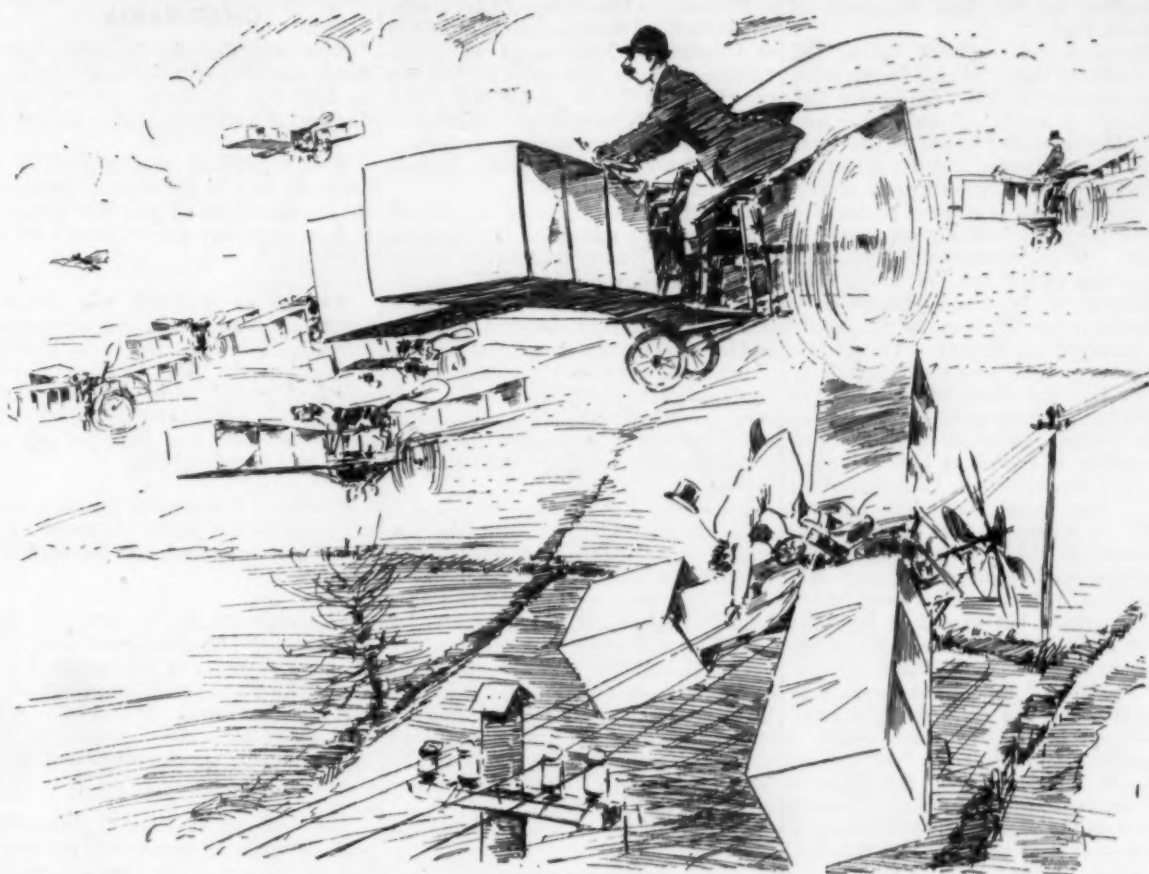


THE BETTER PART OF VALOUR.

LANSDOWNE. "I BAR YOUR WAY? MY DEAR FELLOW! WHY, YOU'VE GOT A MANDATE!"

TRADE DISPUTES BILL. "WELL, SO HAD MY FRIEND HERE."

LANSDOWNE. "AH! BUT NOT SUCH A BIG ONE!"



THE CHASE OF THE FUTURE.

(Extract from letter of sportsman in 190—.)

Aero Lodge, High Leicestershire: "AM HAVING RIPPING SPORT HERE. THE FLYING FOXES WE IMPORTED ARE THE REAL STRAIGHT-NECKED SORT. NO MORE OF THE OLD MUD-LARKING FOR ME. AND NEVER STOPPED BY FROST NOW. CAPITAL HUNT TO-DAY. POOR OLD SPRAGGON TOOK A DEUCE OF A TOSS OVER TELEGRAPH WIRES—DIDN'T PUT ON STEAM ENOUGH OR SOMETHING. CROCKED HIS FLYER ANTHOW—STRAINED A PINION, I HEAR."

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Commons, Monday night, Dec. 3.—Generally understood country is seething with excitement. Constitutional crisis at hand. The Lords, harnessed to Education Bill, have taken the bit between their teeth. Are rushing at break-neck speed down a steep place. Midway, slowly advancing to meet them, is the 300 h.-p. motor-car of majority in Commons. Someone surely will be hurt.

Expect to find excitement bubbling at Westminster, where the storm is generated. Looking in at Commons, find the Chamber almost empty. On his feet is KIMBER, Bart., moving rejection of Plural Voting Bill. Next to Education Bill this the measure that most deeply excites wrath of Opposition. If it stood by itself, chief work of Session, it would stir lowest depths of political con-

troversy, ending in deadlock between the two Houses. As it is, KIMBER's denunciation of its iniquity is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. There are not thirty Members present to have their blood chilled, their flesh caused to creep.

SMITH of Liverpool, who followed in a surprisingly prosy speech, complained of the empty state of the Front Bench. "Which Front Bench?" Members asked themselves. That on which the esteemed Leaders of KIMBER, Bart., should have been seated was absolutely tenantless. LULU had the Treasury Bench all to himself.

Nothing daunted, KIMBER, Bart., manuscript in hand, read his choice bits. The Bill now before the House was not, he insisted, a solitary example of deeply iniquitous plotting. It completed a triad of fell designs against all that was good in an ancient Constitution. The

Education Bill was designed to despoil the Church. The Land Tenure Bill was meant to despoil the landlords. "And this," added KIMBER, Bart., fixing LULU with flaming eye, "is a Bill to despoil the electors."

That's the sort of thing that rises to the height, descends to the depth, of actual political situation. The stranger yawning in the Gallery naturally expected to find the declaration greeted with that storm of cheers and counter-cheers of which he sometimes reads in the papers. If KIMBER, Bart., had been remarking on the dampness of the day, or the lengthening hours of mid-winter nights, reception of his remarks could not have been more chilling.

Yet it is true that crisis is at hand. You can almost hear the rumble of the gun-carriages dragged into position. And the House of Commons is in a state of torpidity out of which it is not

disturbed by the fiery eloquence of KIMBER, Bart.

Business done.—Plural Voting Bill read a third time. Motion for its rejection negatived by 333 votes against 104.

House of Lords. Tuesday, 1 A.M.—Lord CREWE strolled homeward a stricken man. Lords have completed Report of Education Bill. This stage in respect of any measure is a *locus penitentiae*, provided equally for Ministers and Opposition. If in Committee amendments have been added to a Bill which upon reflection it is found desirable to abandon or modify, it can be, frequently is, arranged on Report. There were sanguine persons who convinced themselves that the action of the Lords in Committee, transmogrifying the Bill on vital points, was what in less august assemblies is known as bluff. Having asserted themselves in Committee, the Opposition would, optimists insisted, come to terms on the Report stage. "Instead of which," as the judge said, they have used the Report stage not only to confirm in the main their amendments in Committee, but to add at least one other more hostile to the spirit of the measure fashioned in the Commons.

"My Lords," gasped the Minister in charge of the Bill when to-night LANSDOWNE sprang on House new series of amendments to Clause 4, "some of us thought the faculty of astonishment had been exhausted by the amendments placed on the paper. That this amendment should, at this stage of the Bill, be moved by the Leader of the Opposition, revives emotion in its most acute form."

Young SALISBURY chuckled. A great day for him. LANSDOWNE might lead; he governed. DEVONSHIRE came forward in favourite character of temporiser. Couldn't the Government suggest some compromise? No; RUSKIN threw up his hands in gesture of despair in face of an amendment which, he declared, "struck at the very heart of the Bill."

Curious to note here, as at earlier hour of sitting in the Commons, total absence of outward and visible sign of unrest. Benches fuller than in the Commons; but equal lack of movement. The die is cast. There remains only the Third Reading stage, which offers no opportunity of retreat from position taken up on successive clauses. Within ten days Lords and Commons will be at grips, lion and unicorn fighting for the crown of supremacy in legislative action. Not a ripple of excitement shows on the Benches. Heard in silence is the announcement of the figures showing that in a House of 176 Members LANSDOWNE's fateful amendment has been carried by a majority of 86.

Business done.—Report stage of Education Bill completed.

Thursday.—Usual crop of fairy stories on booksellers' counters marks approach of Christmas. None equal in picturesque, point and colour to that just completed by Lords under title "The Education Bill Changeling." It is issued at net price, though, contrary to custom, the precise cost is not fixed. It may prove incalculable.

Plot of the story simple, as are all masterpieces of this class. In the glad summer-time golden-mouthed St. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL conveyed from the Commons and left on steps of the Lords a lusty infant. It was his first-born; naturally had lavished upon it exceptional measure of pride and affection. The good Lords, he was certain, would cherish the little one. They with their storied wisdom would judiciously strengthen its frame, add fresh grace and vigour to its dimpled limbs.

Coming back at the appointed time to claim the infant, lo! a changeling was placed in anguished father's arms. Regards it with aversion.

"It's no use to us," he said, handing back the hapless babe to LANSDOWNE. "A poor thing. Certainly not mine own."

LEADER OF OPPOSITION declines the charge. It is not his infant. It is PÈRE BIRRELL's, so much improved that he scarcely wonders the paternal eye does not recognize it. PÈRE BIRRELL obdurate. So is LANSDOWNE. Meanwhile what is to become of the Changeling?

Business done.—Lords read Education Bill a third time.

AEROPLANITIES.

DESPITE the present boom in flying machines and the huge prizes which are being offered, there was a slight increase in traffic receipts on the Bakerloo Railway last week.

People in the suburbs of Manchester are feverishly putting wired glass in their skylights.

It is claimed for the aeroplane that it is bound to be good for trade generally. Very soon, if the prophets are to be trusted, everybody's business will be looking up, if only to see what to avoid.

It is very rarely that one sees a balloon in our highways and skyways now. The day of the gas balloon (how delightfully mediæval the words sound!) as an aero-vehicle is past.

Sir THOMAS LIPTON, speaking at the dinner of the Royal Aero-yacht Club the other night, declined to say definitely whether he intended to enter a challenger for the Sky Blue Ribbon, but expressed the hope (with the usual catch in his voice) that the best . . . [*Cætera desunt.*]

CHARIVARIA.

It is said that the Socialists, when they come into power, will not only insist on Old Age Pensions, but will make them payable at the age of twenty-one.

With a practical unanimity which is too rarely seen in the French Chamber, the Deputies have adopted the proposal to raise their own salaries from £360 to £600 a year.

It looks as if Prince von BÜLOW's recent appeal for better relations between Germany and Great Britain is bearing fruit after all. The German gipsies whom we recently assisted back to their country are so touched by our kindly treatment that they hope to pay us another visit next Spring.

The hero of Köpenick has been sent to prison for four years. It seems a sad fate for a man with an international reputation.

King LEOPOLD, in an interview, has stated that the English people forget the class and character of the natives of the Congo. They are, he declares, a barbarous and uncivilised race. If this be so, it is astonishing that there should not be more sympathy between them and some of the Belgian colonists.

The issue of the latest pattern of peaked cap for all branches of the Army has now begun. The shape is exactly the same as that worn by officers. It will be interesting to watch the effect of this experiment on recruiting. We understand that the Army Council is prepared, if necessary, to go so far as to issue Field Marshals' plumes to the rank and file.

The Army Council has decided that we are to have fewer Colonels. Mr. ROOSEVELT, who is not wanting in courage, has never dared to propose such an idea in America, where it would threaten the position of the vast majority of his fellow-citizens.

The Government is about to abolish Geography as a subject of examination for candidates for the Diplomatic Service. Arrangements, we understand, are to be made for explaining to our diplomats, when future appointments take place, the whereabouts of the particular country to which they are accredited.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON, whose achievements in postal reform are so well known, is, we notice, continuing to take an interest in men of letters. His energy seems to be boundless; as a foreigner said to him the other day, he is indeed a busy body.

Mr. F. R. CHURCH, an American painter, has just returned to New York after a tour of the European picture galleries. "What impressed me most about the Old Masters," he tells a *New York Herald* reporter, "was that they did too much work." And what impresses us is the fact that the tireless old fellows are still producing pictures — which American millionaires buy.

We should be the last to object to a joke in the right place, but we must confess it was somewhat of a shock to come across some comic spelling in President ROOSEVELT'S otherwise dignified Message to Congress.

The rivalry between motor omnibuses and trams, so far from dying out, seems to get more acute. Last week, in the Seven Sisters Road, a motor omnibus locked itself with a tram and dragged it off the line.

Flying machines, it is declared, will be much safer than motor-cars. "Seeking safety in flight" is certainly a well-known figure of speech.

"One penny—all made to wind up!" cried the hawker. "What 's that—a list of new Companies?" inquired an absent-minded investor.

The largest Christmas cake in the world is now on view in a shop at Fulham. It took two months to make, and contains 5 cwts. of currants, 5 cwts. of sultanas, 5 cwts. of lemon-peel, 30 cwts. of flour, 16 cwts. of sugar, and 8 cwts. of butter, and we can imagine no more acceptable present for a boy.

The money taken at the Zoological Gardens during the past twelve months reached the record figure of £21,563,

and there is a growing feeling among the animals that they ought to share in the prosperity. Rumours reach us of a movement, set on foot by the gluttons, for insisting on double rations on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

High top-boots for dogs are now being sold in the shops of New York. Grey-

artist, that he creates nothing, that he is full of vanity. It was with a feeling of intense relief that we read last week a denial of these charges by a number of our leading actors.

A vicious bullock which disorganised the traffic on the London and South-Western Railway between Ascot and Egham one day last week, and defied the railway officials for about two hours, has been shot. It is proposed to place cautionary notices, drawing attention to this fact in all fields near the line where there are cattle.

Three eminent architects have consented to make an inquiry into the structural condition of St. Paul's Cathedral. How the Government came to let slip an opportunity for the appointment of another Royal Commission is a puzzle.

The Workmen's Compensation Act is to be extended to Domestic Servants, and in future, when MARY JANE breaks our valuable china, we shall have to pay her compensation for the shock to her system.

"Figures as Illustrations."

For a really helpful comparison one instinctively turns to *The Evening News*. Writing of



BON VOYAGE!

"WAKE UP, WAKE UP, OLD CHAP! YOU'LL HAVE US IN THE DITCH IN A MINUTE!"
"WHAT! HAVEN'T YOU GOT THE REINS?"

hounds are said to look better in them than dachshunds.

Bits for Boys is the title of a volume which has just appeared. We all know that boys are difficult to manage, but we deprecate the suggestion that they should be treated like horses.

Mr. ARMIGER BARCLAY declared in *The Monthly Review* that the actor is not an

the Great Wheel, it says:—

"The following new facts concerning the structure, supplied by the engineer, will be found interesting. The height of the wheel is 300 ft., which is equal to a company of infantry of sixty men, 5 ft. high, standing one on top of the other."

"300 ft." can convey nothing to anybody. "Sixty men, 5 ft. high, standing one on top of the other"—the image leaps to the mind at once.

MARGERY'S SOCK.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN MARGERY was three months old I wrote a letter to her mother:

DEAR MADAM,—If you have a copy in Class D at 1s. 10d. net, I shall be glad to hear from you. I am,

THE BABY'S UNCLE.

On Tuesday I got an answer by the morning post:

DEAR SIR,—In reply to yours: How dare you insult my child? She is in Class A1, priceless, and bought in by the owner. Four months old on Christmas Day. Fancy! I am,

THE BABY'S MOTHER.

MARGERY had been getting into an expensive way of celebrating her birthday every month. Hitherto I had ignored it. But now I wrote:

DEAR MADAM,—Automatically your baby should be in Class D by now. I cannot understand why it is not so. Perhaps I shall hear from you later on with regard to this. Meanwhile I think that the extraordinary coincidence of the baby's birthday with Christmas Day calls for some recognition on my part. What would MARGERY like? You, who are in constant communication with her, should be able to tell me. I hear coral necklaces well spoken of. What do you think? I remember reading once of a robber who "killed a little baby for the coral on its neck"—which shows at any rate that they are worn. Do you know how coral reefs are made? It is a most fascinating business.

Then there is a silver mug to be considered. The only thing you can drink out of a mug is beer; yet it is a popular present. Perhaps you, with your (supposed) greater knowledge of babies, will explain this.

Meanwhile, I am,

THE BABY'S UNCLE.

P.S.—Which is a much finer thing than a mother.

To which her mother:

MY DEAR BOY,—It is too sweet of you to say you would like to get Baby something. No, I don't know how coral reefs are made, and I don't want to. I think it is wicked of you to talk like that; I'm sure I shan't dare to let her wear anything valuable now. And I don't think she really wants a mug. I'm sure I don't know what she does

want, except to see her uncle (There!), but it ought to be something that she'll value when she grows up. And of course we could keep it for her in the meantime.

ARTHUR has smoked his last cigar to-day. Isn't it awful? I have forbidden him to waste his money on any more, but he says he *must* give me 500 for a Christmas present. If he does, I shall give him that sideboard that I want so badly, and then we shall both go to prison together. You will look after Baby, won't you?

I am, THE BABY'S MOTHER.

P.S.—Which she isn't proud, but does think it's a little bit classier than an uncle.

And so, finally, I:

DEAR CHILD,—I've thought of the very thing. I am, THE BABY'S UNCLE.

"I beg your pardon?"

"A sideboard."

"The Sideboard Department is upstairs. Was there anything else for the little girl?"

"Well, a box of cigars. Rather full, and if you have any—"

"The Cigar Department is on the ground floor."

"But your Lord Chamberlain told me I was to come here if I wanted a present for a child."

"If you require anything in the toy line—"

"Yes, but what good are toys to a baby of four months? Do be reasonable."

"What was it you suggested? A sideboard and a cigar?"

"That was my idea. It may not be the best possible, but at least it is better

than perfectly useless toys. You can always blow smoke in its face, or bump its head against the sideboard. *Experto crede*, if you have the Latin."

Whereupon with great dignity I made my way to the lift.

In the Sideboard Department I said: "I want a sideboard for a little girl of four months, and please don't call her 'it.' I nearly had a row with one of your downstairs staff about that."

"I will try to be careful, Sir," he replied. "What sort of a one?"

"Blue eyes, and not much hair, and really rather a sweet smile. . . Was that what you wanted to know?"

"Thank you, Sir. But I meant, what sort of a sideboard?"

I took him confidentially by the arm.

"Look here," I said, "you know how, when one is carrying a baby about, one bumps its head at all the corners? Well, not too much of that. The mothers don't *really* like it, you know. They smile at the time, but . . . Well, not too many corners. . . Yes, I like that very much. No, I won't take it with me."

The attendant wrote out the bill.

"Number, Sir?"

"She's the first. That's why I'm so nervous. I've never bought a sideboard for a child before."

"Your Stores number, I mean, Sir."

"I haven't got one. Is it necessary?"

"Must have a number, Sir."

"Then I'll think of one for you . . . Let's see—12345, how does that strike you?"



Mary Jane (to young brother). "ERE, DON'T YOU PLAY WITH 'IM. 'E'LL LEARN YER TO SWEAR!"

That ends Chapter I. Here we go on to

CHAPTER II.

Chapter II. finds me in the Toy Department of the Stores.

"I want," I said, "a present for a child."

"Yes, sir. About how old?"

"It must be quite new," I said, sternly.

"Don't be silly. The child is only a baby."

"Ah, yes. Now here—if it's at all fond of animals—"

"I say, you mustn't call it 'it.' I get in an awful row if I do. Of course, I suppose it's all right for you, only—well, be careful, won't you?"

The attendant promised, and asked whether the child was a boy or girl.

"And had you thought of anything for the little girl?"

"Well, yes. I had rather thought of a sideboard."

"And the name?"

"Oh, I can't tell you that. You must look that up for yourself. Good-day."

Downstairs I bought some cigars.

"For a little girl of four months," I said, "and she likes them rather full. Please don't argue with me. All your men chatter so."

"I must," said the attendant. "It's like this. If she is only four months, she is obviously little. Your observation is therefore tautological."

"As a matter of fact," I said hotly, "she is rather big for four months."

"Then it was a lie."

"Look here, you give me those cigars, and don't talk so much. I've already had words with your Master of the Sideboards and your Under-Secretary for the Toy Department . . . Thank you. If you would kindly send them."

CHAPTER III.

So there it is. I have given the spirit, rather than the actual letter, of what happened at the Stores. But that the things have been ordered there is no doubt. And when MARGERY wakes up on Christmas Day to find a sideboard and a box of cigars in her sock I hope she will remember that she has chiefly her mother to thank for it.

THE BRITISH SOLDIER.

He was rather a favourite of my young day,

I followed him noon and night,
At Talavera and Albuera,
And up on the Alma's height;
Plassey and Minden and Malplaquet,
I was with him in every fight.

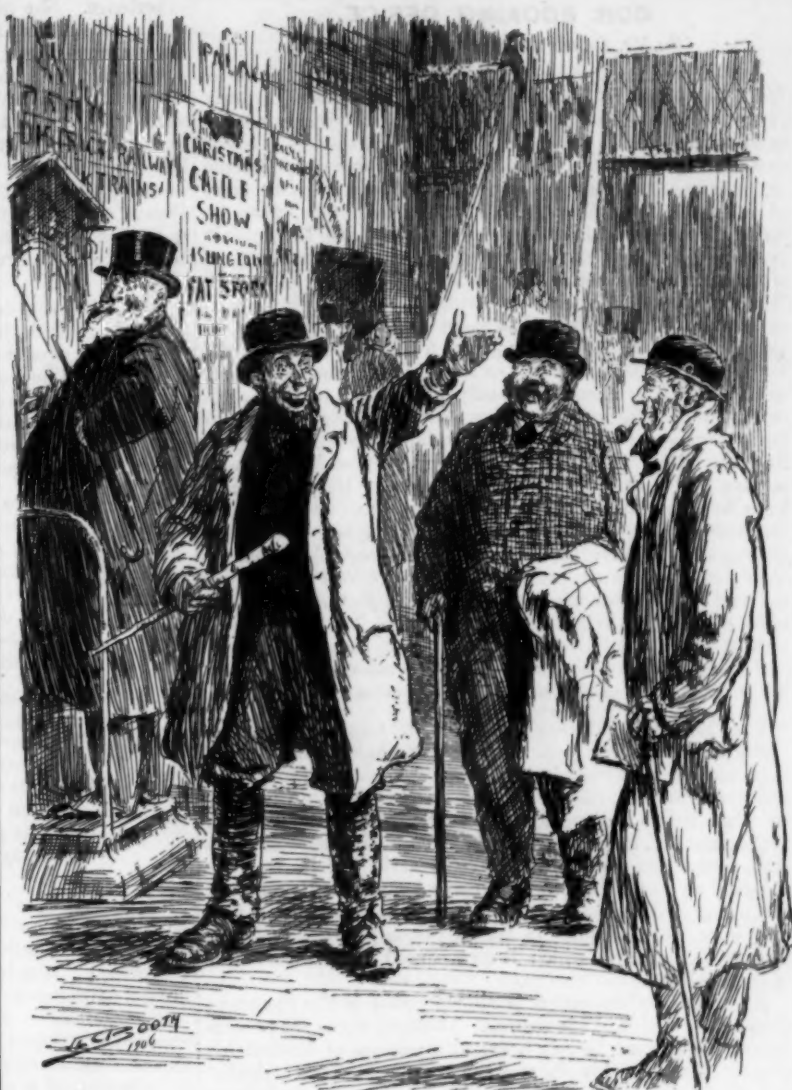
I thrilled when he heard the bugle note,
And led the charge with a cheer,
Footman or yeoman, spearman or bow-
man,

Lancer or Fusilier;
I liked his mail or his scarlet coat,
Which was very bad taste, I fear.

And later it pains me to reflect,
When the news of Mafeking came,
I used for lingo the maddest jingo
Regarding him and his fame;
I called him TOMMY, I recollect,
A vulgar but friendly name.

I thought how often he fought for me,
What deserts and seas he crossed,
I thought of his daring and steadfast
bearing,
Whether he won or lost;
And, thinking of this, forgot, maybe,
Exactly how much he cost.

A peaceful subject, who pays his shot
In the way of taxes and rates,
I am told I am groaning and always
moaning



Yorkshire Farmer (who has laid a wager—to gentleman on weighing machine). "WILL YE TELL US HOW MOOCH YE WEIGH, MISTER?"

Gentleman. "WELL, I'M SEVENTEEN STONE SEVEN."

Farmer. "WHAT DID A' TELL YE, LADS? A' COULDN'T BE WRANG, FOR A'S T' BEST JOODGE O' SWINE IN T' COONTRY!"

At the Army estimates:
I did not know it, but this is what
The accurate critic states.

Let me desert my youthful tracks
To take up a saner ground,
Let his fame as a hero sink to zero,
Let him be merely found
To mean in connection with income-tax
A penny or two in the pound.

He is too expensive: it may be so:
Wise words about him are mumbled;
They talk of reduction and reconstruction,
And I feel properly humbled:
Yet for old sake's sake I want him to
know
That I, for one, never grumbled.

EVERYBODY knows that ten days ago the South Africans beat Wales. To most people it seemed as though there were only two ways of putting this. You might say that "the South Africans beat Wales"; or that "Wales was beaten by the South Africans." Luckily for those who love variety *The Athletic News* discovered a third method. It announced the matter thus:—

"A Nation or a Principality which chooses the succulent and aromatic leek for its emblem, may be excused if occasionally its enemies refuse to eat the pungent vegetable. Not only did the South Africans decline to make a humble meal off the peculiar product of the kitchen garden, but they forced Wales to swallow it with as good grace as possible."

OUR BOOKING OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

Daniel O'Connell, His Early Life and Journal, 1795 to 1802 (ISAAC PITMAN) is a title at which the jaded reviewer jumps. Here is promise of a peep behind the scenes in the early life of one of the most interesting figures of the last two centuries. Alack! alack! In point of interest, personal or historical, the journal might easily be excelled by the diary of a schoolboy of fourteen. It is not even new, passages having been published in an Irish magazine twenty-four years ago. "They did not," the Editor (ARTHUR HOUSTON) sadly admits, "attract as much attention as they deserved." Well, let us see. Under date, Friday, December 11, 1795, it is written: "I went to bed last night at a quarter after twelve, and didn't get up this morning until five minutes after eleven. I remain, in general, too long in bed. This I must endeavour to correct. It is a custom equally detrimental to the constitution and to the mind." Other entries at later date, which fairly represent the journal: "I yesterday received a letter from my father. I must answer it by next post." "I read a sermon by Dr. BLAIR of twenty-four pages." Here the Editor hops in with a biographical note relative to our old friend the Scottish divine. Having mentioned the hour of his down-getting and up-rising, thrilling facts rarely omitted, O'CONNELL chiefly filled his journal with a catalogue of books read during the day. This gives the learned Editor opportunity, lavishly used, of inserting biographical notes about, amongst others, GIBBON, GODWIN and TOM PAINE, with a compendious summary of *The Age of Reason*. These things are informing. But the information is not exactly new, nor is it hopelessly inaccessible.

The Crackling of Thorns (CONSTABLE), by Captain KENDALL—"DUM-DUM" of *Punch*—is a really remarkable collection of light verse. No writer of to-day can get more fun out of an elaborate form of humour. His technique shews an advance on what before had come very near perfection. He has a preference for long stanzas, which seem, in his hands, to lend themselves to a highly-wrought style. If he had not achieved so marked a success in these forms, avoiding at once the otiose and the obscure, one would have supposed that they were more adapted to the garrulous prolixity of BYRON than to the terseness which is an essential of the modern art of light verse.

His faculty of invention is shown rather in the treatment than in the choice of his themes. These, as far as the present volume ranges, are largely confined to studies of himself (his person, his clothes, his affairs of the heart, considered lyrically) and of other and inferior animals. Thus he has odes to the back of his head, to his tall hat, to his fur-lined coat (a most delectable poem); he treats of his tailor's bill, his last illusion, his insomnia, his leap-year prospects, his tendency to reform; he addresses a fat pig, a caged lion, a sea-serpent, a hippopotamus; and makes a very touching threnody on a polar bear. His fancy has, of course, embraced a far wider field of subjects, political or otherwise transient, but with great courage and self-effacement he has refused to present in book form any matter that does not promise to "appeal at any ordinary time to any ordinary person." And this, as he justly hopes, should be "accounted to him for righteousness."

I heartily commend "DUM-DUM's" volume as the best kind of Christmas gift to all who have a palate for the rarer vintages of English humour.

Paper Pellets (ELKIN MATHEWS) by JESSIE POPE, is another collection of poems drawn largely from the pages of *Punch*. A first adventure in book-making, it is less ambitious than Captain KENDALL's work, but it deserves to win a very wide circle of readers, if only as an almost unique example of an Englishwoman's gift for light verse. Yet Miss POPE needs to make no apology either for her sex or for the brevity of her

experience. She has a true sense of humour, a dainty touch, and a nice feeling for rhythmic movement. The critics, not always very expert judges of technique in this school, have employed their usual formulas about the obvious influence of CALVERLEY. It may interest them to know that Miss POPE makes no secret of the fact that she has never had the curiosity to read a line from the work of that admirable exemplar. She will, of course, waste no time in making good this defect in order to find out where she got her originality from. Mr. *Punch*, who has enjoyed an intimate observation of her growing talent, ventures to give a guardian's blessing to what he knows to be an earnest of even better things to come.

When good Sir Nigel trod our soil
He dealt in deeds of knightly glory,
So says Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE
Who (per SMITH, ELDER) tells his story;
In every chapter he is near
To death, yet always fails to strike it—
I fancy from a courteous fear
That gentle readers wouldn't like it.

He battles nobly in the thick
Of odds indubitably trying,
Of which not least I count the trick
Sir ARTHUR has of speechifying.
Whenever someone's going strong,
Sir A. dispatches several pages
To tell how codes of right and wrong
Have altered since the Middle Ages.

Now, booklore-laden atmosphere's
A thing that knights don't really care for;
They like to pull each other's ears
Without a thought of why or wherefore;
And so it rather spoils the fun
To find Sir ARTHUR's warriors waiting
While he postpones their turn for one
Less thrilling but more elevating.

In an *Apologia* prefixed to *The Little Squire* (CASSELL), MRS. HENRY DE LA PASTURE tells us that the story was written in her early youth, and received with unexpected favour. She would "fain have reconstructed it in the light of her present experience, if the process had not involved entire reconstruction." Such rare candour (successful authors, tempted to exhume your youthful indiscretions, please copy) almost disarms criticism, because it forestalls it. The story, to be worthy of a place on the same bookshelf as *Deborah of Tod's* and *Peter's Mother*, should have been entirely reconstructed. The boy squire and his two little friends are amiable, if a trifle elderly for their age; the sham tutor who seeks to disinherit him and marry his widowed mother is a fair sample of the fashion-plate villain, and all of them have too much vitality to fade at once from the memory. But for all that their sayings and doings are hackneyed and amateurishly conceived, and the verdict is that the defendant is not very guilty, but must not do it again, if she values her reputation.

OLGA MORGAN, with her writing-pen and her drawing-pen, and a little paint (mostly red), and HARRY ROUNTREE, with his drawing-pen and a lot of colour (mostly blue), have gone into partnership; and here is Mr. *Punch's Book of Birthdays*, which they have easily induced the Sage to publish at his own office in Bouverie Street. I would like to enlarge upon the pretty child-fancies of its tales, and the whimsical charm of its designs; but Mr. *Punch* cuts me short with these words, marked by a modest dignity all his own: "It is my book of birthdays," says he, "and it bears my *imprimatur*. What need of further commendation?"